

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

10th December 2018, 5.30 – 7.30pm

Present

Trustees: Sara Spivey (SS), Tessa Webber (TW), Lucy Wilby (LW),
Lucy Sinnott (LS), Derek Good (DG) Chair, Chris Batstone (CB), Sharon Brueton (SB)

In attendance

Nathan Waites Chief Financial and Operations Officer (NW), Marion Hallsworth (MH)
Company Secretary

1. Apologies: Alan Cufley was not present and sent apologies after the meeting.

2. Quoracy: was confirmed.

Declarations of Interest: Nathan Waites is a governor at Admiral Lord Nelson School, and he has also updated his Declaration of Interest form to include the fact he has been paid for an article published in the 'School Business Manager' Magazine.

There were no other declarations of interest other than those already registered.

3. Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2018 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

4. Annual Report and Financial Statements 1st September 2017 to 31st August 2018

SS thanked all staff who contributed to the writing of the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st August 2018. David Brookes, Director HWB Accountants, presented the report to the Finance and Audit committee on 3rd December 2018. The Finance and Audit committee scrutinised the report and, apart from the correction of one or two typographical errors, no changes were made and the committee recommended its approval.

The results of the audit are positive, with the control environment judged good and key financial controls in place. Financial systems are in good order and well looked after.

Trustees welcomed the fact that Mr Brookes said HWB considered this to be a clean audit opinion with nothing to cause concern to the ESFA or the Trust.

Trustees unanimously approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31st August 2018.

Mr Brookes will present the Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31st August 2018 to Members at the AGM on 17th December 2018.

5. Budget update

Trustees examined *The De Curci Trust –Consolidated Approved Budget-v Current Working Budget as of Nov 2018 for 2018-19 Full Year*, giving income and expenditure information for Springfield, Solent Junior, Solent Infant, Trust Central and Trust Consolidated.

NW led Trustees through the budget and they noted that the year has ended in a better position than had been anticipated. All three schools have received funds from the Teachers' Pay Grant. These amounts were not known about when the budget was set in July.

The amount of grant has been decided by government and is paid in two instalments, the first of which was received in October. It is not known if the Teachers' Pay Grant will continue after March 2020.

The main changes to expenditure are down to staffing changes. Costs will increase from September due to Teachers' pay rises and increased employer pension contributions. These will rise from 16.48% to possibly 23.6%.

6. Strategy update

DG and SS reported on their recent meeting with the Regional Schools' Commissioner.

The government emphasis appears to have shifted from MAT expansion to 'highly effective MATs'. Here was little discussion of educational performance. The Trust's surplus and CIF bids were discussed.

. SS gave feedback on Portsmouth networking meetings.

Trustees agreed that The Trust should move ahead with feasibility studies into possible expansion at Springfield and Solent Junior sites, with a view to the possibility of them being included in a future CIF bid.

7. Policy approval/ratification

Admissions Policy

The Trust has put revised Admissions Policies for Springfield, Solent Junior and Solent Infant schools out for consultation ending on 31st January 2019. The De Curci Trust Admissions policy will then come before the board for approval. The Trust has been informed that each policy must refer to School employees rather than Trust employees.

Teachers' Pay Policy

The policy has been reviewed and updated in line with PCC's pay scales and after union consultation with PCC and it was examined by the Finance and Audit committee on 3rd December 2018. NW explained a proposed alteration to Appendix 3 and Trustees approved it.

LS proposed approval of the policy and this was seconded by DG.

With the agreed change to Appendix 3 Trustees approved the Teachers' Pay Policy with a review date of December 2019.

ACTION: NW to send revised Appendix 3 to MH

Trustees' Allowances Policy

Trustees examined the policy and NW drew attention to the Charity Commission guidance at the bottom of page two.

DG proposed approval of the Trustees' Allowances policy and this was seconded by SB.

Trustees approved the Trustees' Allowances Policy with a review date of December 2021.

ACTION: NW to send Trustees' Allowances claim form to MH

8. Terms of reference of Academy committees 2018-19.

The terms of reference for the following Academy committees were examined:

- Resources
- Behaviour and Safety
- Curriculum and Standards

LS proposed approval of the **Terms of Reference for the Resources committee** and this was seconded by DG. Trustees unanimously approved the **Terms of Reference for the Resources committee with a review date of Autumn 2019.**

Tessa Webber joined the meeting.

DG proposed approval of the **Terms of Reference for the Behaviour and Safety Committee** and this was seconded by SB. Trustees unanimously approved the **Terms of Reference for the Behaviour and Safety committee with a review date of Autumn 2019.**

DG proposed approval of the **Terms of Reference for the Curriculum and Standards Committee** and this was seconded by SB. Trustees unanimously approved the **Terms of Reference for the Curriculum and Standards committee with a review date of Autumn 2019.**

9. Reports from committees

Finance and Audit

LS reported on the meeting held on 3rd December 2018. At that meeting Trustees examined the Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31st August 2018 and The De Curci Trust Audit Findings Report for the Year Ended 31st August 2018. The audit had a positive outcome and the few items identified for improvement have been actioned or are scheduled to be actioned. The De Curci Trust Financial Handbook was reviewed and re-approved.

Trustees had noted their responsibilities as set out in the letter from the ESFA, dated 18th.

As part of the committee's rolling programme of scrutiny, Trustees examined section 3 of the updated risk register: Compliance Risks.

Summary reports from LGBs

Trustees noted the content of the unsigned minutes of the Solent schools' LGB meeting held on 9th October 2018 and of Springfield School's LGB meeting on 18th October 2018.

TW gave a verbal report on the Solent LGB meeting that took place last week. There is a new staff governor and a co-opted governor. The next training at Solent will be 'The Path to outstanding Governance' and will take place in February 2019. It may be possible to invite a Springfield governor.

CB presented the Springfield minutes and drew attention to the good GCSE results achieved. Trustees have been sent the GCSE results booklet.

The meeting had been preceded by training on Alternative Provision and on Springfield's Behaviour systems. The Safeguarding policy has been reviewed and re-approved at the meeting.

10. Educational achievement reports

Most results at **Solent Infant school** were above the national levels. Writing was slightly below the national level and this is a priority area of focus.

Q. Is there any correlation between prior nursery attendance and school results?

A. 100% of last year's entry had some form of pre -school attendance. Solent has 27 feeder nurseries.

Q. Does Solent give feedback on performance to nurseries?

A. Not currently, but Solent staff visit the main feeder nurseries and give advice to parents.

At **Solent Junior school** last year Key Stage 2 results had taken a dip and so targeted plans were put in place to secure improvement. Trustees were pleased to note these had been effective and noted the improvement in this year's results.

Trustees noted the good GCSE outcomes at **Springfield school** where 71% of the cohort attained a standard pass (grade4+), and 50% a strong pass (grade 5+) in both English and Mathematics. Attainment in the majority of subjects was strong, although there is some disappointment with the results for History and Modern Foreign Languages.

RAPs are in place for improvements these subjects. EBacc entry is again above national average.

11. Trustee vacancies/appointment.

Term of office.

The term of office as Trustee for Alan Cufley and Chris Batstone ends on 1st January 2019. Both have agreed to stand again for re-election.

Derek Good announced his intention to resign as a Trustee when his term of office ends on 1st January 2019. He will remain as a Member.

This means there will be two Trustee vacancies in the New Year. The Trust's Trustee Recruitment protocol is being followed and two candidates will be interviewed on 14th December.

Replacement of Safeguarding Trustee.

Tessa Webber has done Safeguarding training and she volunteered to be the Safeguarding Trustee.

DG proposed Tessa Webber to take on the role of Safeguarding Trustee from 1st January 2019 and was seconded by CB. The board voted unanimously in favour.

12. Training

SB is collating the results of the latest skills matrix and will present the results to the next Human Resource committee meeting.

It was agreed that the next training session will be on Risk Management and Health and Safety statutory compliance and will take place after the Spring half-term.

ACTION: SB will arrange for an appropriate date and person to deliver this.

13. CIF bid

NW updated Trustees on the CIF bid preparations. Surveyors have visited all three sites.

The deadline for submissions is 13th December 2018.

Springfield school

The roofing project at Springfield (Blocks A, C and the DT block) is set to cost approximately £783,493 in total ex vat. It is proposed that the school contributes £23,103 of capital funding from the 19/20 Capital budget towards this project, and borrows an interest free SALIX loan over 8 years, of £12,736. This makes the school contribution £35,839, approximately 4.5% of project cost.

Springfield Science Block Windows and cladding

In relation to A block windows and cladding a cost of £906,404 has just been received.

Again, we would suggest that the school contributes £23,103 for capital funding from 18/19 for this project, and borrows an interest free SALIX loan over 8 years of £8,006.

Solent Junior School Roofing Project

At the Junior School, the re-roofing project is set to cost £845,920 ex vat, with the school contributing £15,000 of capital funding, and applying for a SALIX loan of £8683. A total contribution of £23,683. The Solent LGB is supportive of this.

Q. Are there any hidden costs that might increase school costs?

A. Contingency calculations e.g. finding and removing asbestos have been built in.

NW outlined a timelines if the bid was approved.

DG proposed approval of the bids and was seconded by CB. Trustees unanimously approved the schools' contributions and loans as set out above.

ACTION: NW to update the relevant De Curci Trust policies in line with the loans and investments agreed.

14. Progress on MAT Self-Evaluation

SS introduced the *DFE Draft MAT Improvement Capacity Framework: The De Curci Trust*. Trustees welcomed this as a very useful and something that would help to inform the next three years of the Strategic Plan. Trustees discussed how best to build on the framework and agreed that sections of it should be reviewed at each Board meeting.

15. Proposal to move some fund into an account paying higher interest

Trustees discussed the Cash Optimiser proposal, noting that there could be no access to funds with a fixed term account, but an improved level of interest, albeit still low by historic standards, would be gained.

It would be a legitimate investment under ESFA rules, but the Trust's Reward and Investment policy would have to be altered as it is the Trust's current policy that no investments will be made until such time as the Board of Trustees approves an alternative Investment policy.

The Trust's auditors have raised no objections to this course of action.

ACTION: NW to set out a formal, detailed proposal for a 6 month investment of £300,000 and send it to LS and SS who will conduct due diligence checking on the suggested account. If they approve the move then the proposal will be put to an E-vote by Trustees.

16. AOB

There will be a new Head of School in place at Solent Infant School in January 2019.

This being his last Board meeting, Trustees thanked Derek Good for his hard work and dedication to the Trust.

Items for the next: meeting (4th March at Solent Infant School)

Budgets update (Standing item)

Election of Chair

Admissions policy

CIF Bid

MAT Self-evaluation (Standing item) Section one: Vision, Culture and Ethos.

ACTION POINT SUMMARY

Action	Person responsible	completed by
Send revised Pay policy Appendix 3 to MH	Nathan Waites	ASAP
Send Trustees' Allowances claim form to MH	Nathan Waites	ASAP

Send the minutes from F&A meeting 03/12/18 to Trustees.	Marion Hallsworth	ASAP
Arrange for an appropriate date and person to deliver training on Risk Management and Health and Safety Statutory Compliance to take place after the Spring half-term.	Sharon Breuton	Next meeting
Update the relevant De Curci Trust policies in line with the loans and investments agreed for CIF bids and for moving funds into an account paying a higher rate of interest,	Nathan Waites	Next meeting
NW to set out a formal, detailed proposal for a 6 month investment of £300,000 and send it to LS and SS who will conduct due diligence checking. If they approve the move, then the proposal will be put to an E-vote by Trustees.	Nathan Waites Lucy Sinnott & Sara Spivey Marion Hallsworth	Next meeting

There was no other business and the meeting closed.

Signature of Chair:

Date:

The De Curci Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 10646541. Registered office address: Springfield School Central Road, Drayton, Portsmouth, Hampshire, United Kingdom, PO6 1QY.